


BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 97-239-C - ORDER NO. 2003-555  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2003

IN RE: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines for an Intrastate Universal Service Fund	) ) ) )	ORDER GRANTING MOTIONS/REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT
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This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the Motions/Requests of ALLTEL South Carolina, Inc. ("ALLTEL"), Bluffton Telephone Company, Inc. ("Bluffton"), Hargray Telephone Company, Inc. ("Hargray"), Home Telephone Company, Inc. ("Home"), Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Horry"), PBT Telecom, Inc. ("PBT"), and BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. ("BellSouth") (collectively, the "Companies") for this Commission to treat certain materials filed in this matter as confidential. The materials referenced pertain to the cost of service studies filed by the Companies as required in order for the Companies to receive funding beyond the initial step related to the implementation of the intrastate Universal Service Fund (USF). As set out in Commission Order No. 2001-419, any local exchange carrier applying for further reductions under the State USF must file detailed cost data with the Commission clearly demonstrating that implicit support exists in the rates that are proposed to be reduced. The materials involved were furnished with the Motions/Requests under seal and marked accordingly.

The Companies each filed a Motion/Request for confidential treatment with their cost studies stating various reasons as to why the submitted material should not be disclosed. Largely, the Companies state that the studies contain proprietary business information regarding the Companies' operations and costs, and that, in light of the more competitive telecommunications environment, it is not appropriate to make detailed information regarding the Companies publicly available. The Companies assert that access to this information could give actual and potential competitors an unfair competitive advantage. The Companies also note that confidential treatment of these studies would be consistent with this Commission's prior rulings and prior treatment of similar information.

After reviewing the Motions/Requests, we agree with the Companies, and therefore grant their Motions/Requests for confidential treatment of the cost studies submitted in support of their latest requests in this Docket. In today's competitive environment, we agree that making the information publicly available could give actual and potential competitors an unfair competitive advantage, and we have allowed such information to be kept confidential in the past. Accordingly, the material described is declared confidential.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.



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Mignon L. Clyburn, Chairman

ATTEST:



Gary E. Walsh, Executive Director

(SEAL)